



P.E.T. PUBLICATIONS

ASHURA

Events of Karbala



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MAJLIS 7
MARTYRDOM OF HAZRAT QASIM
AND HAZRAT ABBAS

Upon seeing Aun and Muhammad achieving Shahadat, Qasim went to his mother Umme Farwah and told her that Aun and Muhammad had secured Imam Husayn's (a.s.) permission on the intercession of their mother, but that he had nobody to plead on his behalf with his uncle. Seeing Hazrat Qasim so dejected, Umme Farwah recollected the letter which Imam Hasan (a.s.) had left for Hazrat Qasim which was tied to his arm. It said: "O my son Qasim, when you see your uncle Imam Husayn (a.s.) surrounded by enemies at Karbala, do not spare any effort, even your life, to help him and to fight for him against his enemies and those of the prophet. And even if you find him reluctant in giving you permission to fight, you should insist on his permission." Umme Farwah went along with

Hazrat Qasim to Imam Husayn (a.s.) and told him that she was a widow and that it was her husband's last wish so he should grant Hazrat Qasim permission to go to the battlefield. Imam Husayn (a.s.) upon reading the letter started weeping as it brought back memories of his dear brother. With effort Imam Husayn (a.s.) controlled himself, turned to Hazrat Qasim and said: "Dear child, your father's wishes which I regard as commands for me, leave me no other alternative. March on, Qasim, as your father wished you to do. If it is so ordained that I may bear the wound of your martyrdom, I shall bow to the will of Allah." At this moment Imam Husayn told Umme Farwah to pray for his son's success as he was going to face a very brave warrior from the enemy's side. She prayed two Rakat Namaz, with tears in her eyes to give success to Qasim against the enemy.

Reaching the battlefield Hazrat Qasim addressed

the enemy with an eloquence which reminded many of the sermons of his grandfather Ali (a.s.). Umar ibn Saad ordered his men to challenge him to single combat.

Hazrat Qasim fought the battle and threw the enemies men from their horses as if he were a seasoned warrior and not a youth of 14 and killed 4 sons of a brave soldier in the enemy's army, one by one. Upon seeing his 4th son being killed by Hazrat Qasim (a.s.) the soldier attacked him with full anger and force. Umar ibn Saad seeing Hazrat Qasim's bravery and skill ordered his soldiers to jointly attack Hazrat Qasim. Hazrat Qasim now had to fend off thousands who attacked him mercilessly with swords, spears, daggers and arrows from all directions and finally succeeded in wounding him from head to foot. When he saw that he could no longer remain in the saddle, he uttered a cry offering his last salutations to his uncle Imam Husayn

(a.s.). Imam Husayn (a.s.) upon reaching the battlefield, felt as if he had himself received all the wounds inflicted on Hazrat Qasim. He unsheathed his sword and like an enraged lion he rushed cutting through the enemy hoards. Such was the fury of his charge that the enemy was reminded of the charges of Imam Ali (a.s.) in the battle of Siffin. The stampede of Yazids soldiers was such that the body of Hazrat Qasim was trampled under the feet of hundreds of enemies. When Imam Husayn (a.s.) reached Hazrat Qasim he stumbled from his horse And fell to the ground exclaiming: “My Allah what have these cowards done to my Qasim?” After a while he took off his robe and started gathering the pieces of Hazrat Qasim’s body. One by one he put them all in his robe and muttered: “My Qasim, your mother had sent you out dressed as a groom. Now you are returning to her with your body crushed to pieces.” Umme Farwah upon seeing Hazrat Qasim’s body, proudly went in Sajdah and thanks

Allah that her only son's sacrifice was accepted. It was the steadfastness and determination of Umme Farwah and other mothers of Karbala who were ready to sacrifice their son's for the mission of Imam Husayn (a.s.).

After Hazrat Qasim's Shahadat Hazrat Abbas directed his brothers Abdullah, Jaffer and Usman to advance towards the enemy. They went forward and fought the enemy in defense of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and fell as martyrs.

When Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) approached Imam Husayn (a.s.) for permission to go to the battlefield he replied, "You are my *Alam* (Flag) bearer" to which Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) said "O! My master my own life is a burden to me now, and I cannot bear this life any more. Moreover I have to bring water for Sakina and other thirsty children." When Hazrat Abbas(a.s.) advanced towards the battlefield, his fight resembled that

of his father Imam Ali (a.s.), the lion of God, and true justice cannot be done to its description in a mere line or two. Hazrat Abbas's strength, valor, dexterity, skills, hid devotion to the cause of truth and his attachment to Imam Husayn (a.s.) are unique in the history of the world. After terrible fight, Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) reached the bank of the river and filled the sac (*Mashk*) with water for the thirsty children in Imam Husayn's camp.

Being baffled by his utter fearlessness and continued advance towards his goal, the enemies stooped to cowardly devices to overpower him. One, Hakim bin Tufail gave a sword stroke on his right hand and severed it. Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) cared more for his *Alam* than for his life. He immediately shifted the *Alam* to his left shoulder shouting, "even though you have cut away my right hand I will not forsake the *Alam* which symbolizes faith and will protect it till my

death.” A blow from an enemy severed his left arm and Hazrat Abbas now held the sack with his teeth and protected the bag with his chest, pressed on the horses back. Now the utmost thought in his mind was to reach the camp somehow or the other. A silent prayer came on his lips “Merciful Allah spare me long enough to fulfill my mission.” But that was not to be. At this very moment the arrow stuck the water sac (*Mashk*) and the water began to pore out and with the water all the hopes of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) pored out to the sands of Karbala to be buried forever in the thirsty desert. Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) now did not want to go back and face Sakina who was very thirsty and was anxiously waiting for his uncle. With his feet, he signaled the horse to turn back. The enemy surrounded him from all sides. Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) fell from the horse. As he fell he cried out “My Salutations (Salaams) to you my Master” Imam Husayn (a.s.) seems to use all his strength when he heard the voice of his dear brother Hazrat Abbas (a.s.).

When Hazrat Abbas left the camp to go and fetch water, Imam Husayn (a.s.) stood at the gate of the camp watching the *Alam*. Sakina was standing next to Imam Husayn (a.s.) with her eyes fixed towards the *Alam*. When Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) reached the river bank and bent down to fill the mashk, the *Alam* disappeared from sight. Sakina was frightened and looked at her father. Imam told Sakina that Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) was at the river bank filling the *Mashk*. Sakina smiled and called out all the children to welcome Hazrat Abbas (a.s.). When Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) lost both his arms and the *Alam* fell onto the ground Sakina could not see it any longer. She looked at Imam Husayn (a.s.) but he turned his face away. Sakina began to tremble with fear and her eyes filled with tears. She raised her hands and prayed, “O Allah! Do not let them kill my uncle Abbas. I will never ask for water again” and ran inside to her mother.

When Imam Husayn (a.s.) was going towards the battlefield he found the severed arms of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.). It was a tragic sight. Hazrat Abbas was lying on the ground in a pool of blood. There was an arrow in the right eye and blood blocked the left eye. As soon as Hazrat Abbas sensed the presence of Imam Husayn (a.s.) he said, “Master! Why did you take the trouble to come over? Please go back and look after Sakina” Imam Husayn (a.s.) said, “My dear brother, all your life you have served me and my children. Is there anything I can do for you at this last moment of your life?” Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) replied “Master! Please clean the blood from my eyes so that I can see your beloved face before I die” Imam cleaned the blood and Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) fixed his gaze on Imam. Then he said, “Master! Please don’t carry my body to the camp, I do not wish Sakiaa to see me in this state.” Imam Husayn (a.s.) took Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) in his arms and said “O Abbas! I also have one request for you, I have

never heard you call me brother, for once I would like to hear you call me brother.” Hazrat Abbas (a.s.), with his dying breath called out “My Brother”, Imam Husayn (a.s.) cried, “O Abbas! My beloved brother what have they done to you? Who is now left to fight by my side?” Just then the thirty four years old Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) the brave son of Imam Ali (a.s.) breathed his last. Imam Husayn (a.s.) placed Sakina’s *Mashk* on the *Alam* and carried it to the camp. He went to Sayyeda Zainab’s camp and could not say a word, He gave the *Alam* to Syeda Zainab and sat down on the floor.

MAJLIS 8
MARTYRDOM OF HAZRAT ALI AKBAR
AND INNOCENT ALI ASGHAR

Next in line to lay down his life in the cause of truth, was Imam Husayn's son Ali Akbar. Born of Imam Husayn's wife Laila binte Abi Murra, he was in the very prime of youth. This eighteen year old son of Imam Husayn (a.s.), who had the distinction of being highly similar to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) in looks, was loved so much by everyone that the account of his leave taking from his mother, aunts, sisters and other relatives is very pathetic. At last when Imam Husayn (a.s.) sent Ali Akbar, the "Ahmed-e-Thani" (Muhammad the second) to the battlefield, he raised his head towards heaven and said, "Allah here I sent in your way, the one who resemble the most with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, whenever we did desire to have a view of the Holy face, we used to look at the face

of this youth. O Allah! Husayn has one Ali Akbar and he is sent to be sacrificed for your cause, had I many more like him, I would have similarly offered them all in your way.”

When Ali Akbar went to the battlefield and faced the enemy with all the bravery that he inherited from his grand father Imam Ali (a.s.), it is reported that the enemy forces were so much amazed at his resemblance with the Holy Prophet that such of those who had seen him before, wondered if the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) had reappeared in the world to help his dear grandson Husayn. People were so anxious to have a look at the enchanting beauty of the youth that those in the rear of the enemy's ranks, mounted on the horses and camels, even stood on the backs of the animals to have a look at the matchless and the wonder striking beauty of this son of the Holy Imam. Ali Akbar reminded the enemy that his father Imam Husayn (a.s.) did not

harm them and by spilling his blood they were making the Holy Prophet very sad, one by one he fought them with great skill and killed many of them. Ali Akbar received many wounds and was losing a lot of blood. The thirst was getting unbearable and Ali Akbar turned his horse back to his camp. He reached his father who was watching the battle and requested some water from him. Imam Husayn said "I am sad that I do not have any water to give you." Instead he gave his parched tongue to Ali Akbar to which Ali Akbar said, "O! Father your tongue is more drier than mine." After returning to the battlefield Hazrat Ali Akbar fought very bravely but it was not long before Imam Husayn heard the painful cry from the battlefield. "Father, Akbar has fallen with a mortal wound in his chest. Father come to me so that I can convey my last salutations to you." Ali Akbar fell with the fatal wound in his chest. Imam Husayn (a.s.) now felt very weak. He rose from the ground and fell, he rose again and

fell again, with one hand on his chest he struggled and rushed in the direction from which the cry had come. He cried and said “Akbar give me another shout so that I can follow its direction. Akbar my sight has gone with the shock I have received and there is nobody to guide me to you.” Imam Husayn was stumbling his way onwards and the distance seemed endless but atlast Imam Husayn reached the place where Ali Akbar was lying in a pool of blood. When he saw his son he cried out “here I am my son, please talk to me.” Ali Akbar was in great pain, the broken end of the arrow was sticking out of his chest, Imam Husayn (a.s.) asked his son to put his two arms around him so that he could carry him but Alas! Ali Akbar’s hand was on his chest and he could not lift it. Imam Husayn (a.s.) bent on his knees, said “Ya Ali” and pulled the arrow from his chest and blood was gushing out. Ali Akbar died in his fathers arms. Only Allah knows what a patient heart Imam Husayn (a.s.) had been

endowed with which never gave way against any hardship even that of the loss of such a son. Imam Husayn lifted Hazrat Ali Akbar carefully as if protecting him from any more pain. He took the body in the camp and laid down Ali Akbar's body on the ground. He called Umme Laila and Zainab and Kulsoom, Fizza and other ladies of the house to see the face of Ali Akbar for the last time. Ali Akbar's mother went up to her husband, and with sobs and bent head said to him "my master I am proud of Akbar for dying such a noble death. He has laid down his life in the way of Allah and this thought will sustain me till the death of my life." Syeda Zainab and Kulsoom and Sakina and all other ladies flung themselves on Ali Akbar's body and tears were flowing from their eyes.

Imam Husayn (a.s.) sat for a few minutes near the dead body of his son, the son who had died craving for a drop of water to quench his thirst. At last he rose from the ground, wiped the tears

from his eyes and muttered: *Inna Lillahe Wa Inna Ilyhe Rajeeon* (Verily from Allah we come, and unto him is our return).

When Imam Husayn (a.s.) stood alone in the battlefield, surrounded by the enemies, he was called upon by his sister Zainab in the camp. When he went into the tent, he found his six month old son Hazrat Ali Asghar dying of thirst in his cradle. And the poor mother Rubab whose milk had dried up by the continuous thirst and hunger, could not help the baby with even a drop of milk. Telling the mother that he would show the baby to the enemy and get some water if they gave it, Imam Husayn (a.s.) took the baby to the battlefield by covering with his robe. The soldiers of Yazid saw Imam Husayn (a.s.) coming towards them, his back bent, his body wounded, his beard turned completely white with sorrow and grief in the span of a few hours. They saw him bringing something held under his robe. Many thought

that Imam Husayn (a.s.) was bringing the Holy Quran to plead with them that the conflict between them and Yazid be resolved by the arbitrament of this Holy Book. He walked toward them and stood at a distance from where they could see him clearly. He removed his robe which was covering Ali Asghar, held the child high in his hand and said: "O people! If in your opinion, Husayn is guilty any sin or crime, this innocent baby has done nothing to hurt any one of you. He is dying of thirst. He has had neither milk nor water for the last three days. Would you quench his thirst by a few drops of water? If you suspect that I demand water for my self in the name of the baby, then I will leave him here, if you want, and go away and you may return him with his thirst quenched."

It is reported that this address presented of the Imam with the thirsty innocent baby in his arms, was so touching that even the men in the

enemy's army could not help being moved to tears. Weeping, they cursed Yazid and his deputy Ibn Ziyad (Governor of Kufa). Umar ibn Saad, fearing a revolt of his forces in sympathy of Imam Husayn (a.s.), at once ordered a stone hearted brute named Hurmala to answer Imam Husayn (a.s.). Hurmala shot his first arrow toward Ali Asghar and missed it. Hurmala took out another arrow and aimed it at the child. An expert marksmen though he was, he could not take correct aim as he saw in the distinct back ground, near the curtain of the tent. This was Ume Rubab (Mother of Ali Asghar). Umar ibn Saad, who was watching the two abortive attempts of his best archer, got scared at his failures. He knew that every second that passes was dangerous for him. He therefor pushed Hurmala, giving him most extravagant promises of reward, to hasten with his third arrow. The tyrant now shot a three pronged arrow usually reserved for the slaying of the animals, from his bow, which, after piercing

from the Imams arms, became lodged in the tiny neck of the innocent baby. Blood flowing from his neck, the baby looked at his fathers face, smiled and stopped breathing forever. Imam Husayn (a.s.) collecting the blood that pored out of the neck of the baby in his hand. It is reported that when he wanted to pour it on the earth, Imam Husayn (a.s.) heard a voice coming from the earth, “O Holy Imam! I cannot bear this innocent blood” and when the Holy Imam wanted to throw the blood towards heaven he heard a voice saying, “O Holy Imam! Throw not the innocent blood towards me for I cannot bear it.” An Urdu poet has versified the event: *Inkar Aasmaan ko hai, razi zamen nahi Asghar tumhary Khoon ka Thikana kaheen nahi.*

Finally Imam Husayn smeared his face with the blood of the innocent baby Ali Asghar (a.s.).

Imam Husayn (a.s.) could not take the dead baby

to be returned to his mother, who was waiting anxiously for it. At the door he waited for a moment and then turned back, this he did seven times as if he was building his strength to face the mother of the baby who had been so brutally murdered. This action of Imam Husayn (a.s.) of going to the tent and coming back is the Amal we do on the day of Ashura. Rubab looked at her husband's face, covered in blood and cried out, "What have they done to my son, did they even give him a drop of water before they killed him."

Rubab said, "Please bury Ali Asghar with your own hands as after your martyrdom the enemy forces would not hesitate to violate the dead bodies of the martyrs. I want my child to be spared from this treatment." Hence, he sat down to bury Ali Asghar in the burning sand of the desert. Does not this single sacrifice suffice to touch every human heart? Can we not call this one sacrifice alone greater than the sacrifice offered by Hazrat Ibrahim?

MAJLIS 9

FINAL SEPARATION OF IMAM HUSAYN AND HIS MARTYRDOM

The details of the final separation of Imam Husayn (a.s.) from the helpless ladies, children and other inmates of his camp, particularly from his sisters Zainab and Kulsum, are very heart rending. During the departure to the battlefield, Imam Husayn (a.s.) called for the shirt that his mother Sayyeda Fatimah Zahra had stitched for this time. Imam Husayn tore it from different places as he knew that the enemies will not even spare his clothes and take them as spoils. After putting on this shirt he came near Sayyeda Zainab and asked her to remove the veil from her shoulders. He kissed them and said that, “the enemies would tie these shoulders with tight ropes.” After this Sayyeda Zainab took a kiss of Imam Husayn’s (a.s.) throat and told him that, “our father, Imam Ali (a.s.) had told me to kiss

your throat at this point as this is the place from where the enemy will brutally behead you.” Both the brother and sister cried bitterly. To Sayyeda Zainab and Kulsoom, his 2 sisters, Imam Husayn (a.s.) said: “Our camp will be plundered and set on fire. After I am slain, the series of calamities to you all would begin. O my dear sisters, let not patience under any suffering be lost. The enemies will take you prisoners and parade you in the streets of Kufa and Shaam. This will be a very difficult time for you. Bear every calamity in the way of Allah with patience and fortitude.” Sayyeda Zainab (a.s.) with tears rolling down her cheeks promised her brother that she would not let him down.

Then Imam Husayn (a.s.) told Sayyeda Zainab “I am leaving the widows and orphans in your care. My dear sister please look after my Sakina especially, she has never been separated from me even for a day. Please dear sister when you

get water give it to her first. She hasn't asked for water since her uncle Abbas died."

At this point Sayyeda Sakina came forward and said "O father, when Muslim bin Aqeel was martyred, you hugged his orphan girl and patted her head. If you go, who is going to pat my head?" Imam's eyes filled with tears. While fighting back his tears, he picked up Sakina and kissed her cheeks knowing that these cheeks were going to be slapped by the cruel hands of Yazid's men.

Imam Husayn (a.s.) went over to each lady and each child and affectionately bid them his last farewell. He turned to his aged nurse, Fizza, who had looked after him from his childhood. He asked her to bless him as she had been blessing him since his childhood. To Fizza, Imam Husayn (a.s.) was like a son.

At the time of Sayyeda Fatimah's death she had promised to remain with him and never to leave him. This parting was tearing her heart into pieces. Her aged eyes were filled with tears and she said, "Farewell my son. May Allah be with you in the hour of your supreme trial." She was crying from the depth of her heart while parting with Imam Husayn (a.s.). Imam Husayn (a.s.) then went into the tent where his son, Imam Zainul Abideen, was lying unconscious with high fever. He bent over to him and shook him by his shoulder and said "My son, I have come to bid farewell to you." Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) opened his eyes and saw his father who had so many wounds on his body, that for one moment he looked at him speechless and bewildered as if he could not recognize him. With all the efforts he sat up on the bed and cried "What have the enemies done to you father, what has happened to your faithful friends? What has happened to my uncle Abbas? My brother Ali Akbar? My cousins Qasim, Aun and Muhammad?"

“My son”, replied Imam Husayn (a.s.) with a sigh “All of them have tasted *Shahadat*, even your brother Ali Asghar has been mercilessly killed with arrow in my arms and the enemies did not even give him a drop of water to quench his thirst. Now, there is no male member left in this camp except you and I. Now my turn has come to go out and die fighting and I have come to bid you farewell.” Hearing this Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) rose from his bed and said “Father, so long as I am alive you cannot go. Let me die fighting as my brothers, cousins and uncles have done.”

Imam Husayn (a.s.) gently put him on bed and said “My son, I command you as your father and spiritual leader, to remain in bed. Your task is to accompany your aunts, mother and sisters and other ladies in captivity, to march through the streets of Kufa and Shaam, with hands and feet in chains, to bear insults in the court of Yazid and undergo imprisonment and to bear all these

things with patience. Your destiny has singled you out to demonstrate for all time that real *Jihad* means showing faith in the hour of trial when confronted with the most difficult situations. What you will suffer, my son, will be far worse than death.” With these words, Imam Husayn clasped his son to his bosom and transferred the *Imamat* to him. The father and son parted forever. The grief was too much for Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) and he fell down unconscious.

Imam Husayn (a.s.) came out from his tent and now standing all alone, wanted to mount his horse (Zuljana) but it would not move forward and Imam Husayn (a.s.) saw that his four year old Sayyeda Sakina was clinging to the horse’s fore legs, crying away and saying “Zuljana, I implore you not to take away my father to the battlefield as none of my dear ones has returned from there.” Imam Husayn (a.s.) came down, took his daughter in his lap and kissed her and said to her,

“My dearest Sakina, why did you rush out of the tent.” Sakina told Imam Husayn that she wanted to lie on his chest for the last time, so Imam Husayn let her rest on his chest when suddenly she got up and said “Father, please go!” Imam Husayn asked Sakina that why did she get up and she replied that her grandmothers voice, who asked her to let Imam Husayn go. Imam Husayn went towards the battl field and was bleeding from innumerable wounds from head to toe, gave his last call to humanity around him, saying:

Hal min nasirin yan sorona (Is there any helper to help us)

Hal min Mugisun Yugisona (Is there any defender) to repulse the enemy from approaching the tents of the family of the Holy Prophet?

It is reported that in response to the call from Imam Husayn (a.s.) some mysterious voices of *labbaik labbaik* (yes we are here O grandson of

the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.)) were heard from the spiritual world above, to which Imam Husayn (a.s.) replied “Thanks to you all, but my concern here today is only with the living in the physical world.”

Inspite of three days hunger and thirst Imam Husayn (a.s.) remained steadfast and fought very bravely and killed many people from the enemy forces. Imam Husayn (a.s.) rode on straight to the armies arrayed against him on the opposite side. The soldiers of Umar ibn Saad saw Imam Husayn (a.s.) coming towards them clad in the Prophets turban and robe. Facing the army he addressed “O soldiers of Yazid, I have come to ask you whether you know who I am. If any of you do not know me, I make it clear that I am the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) whom you acknowledge as the Prophet of Islam. I am the son of the Prophet’s daughter Fatimah and the Prophet’s cousin Ali. I ask you whether you

have not seen the Prophet carrying me and my brother Hasan, on his shoulders, when we were young children? Have you not heard the Prophet say that I was his beloved child? Have you not seen the Prophet crying with grief when I cried on account of any sorrow? The Prophet is no more but I am here before you. You have wounded my heart by mercilessly killing my son, my brothers, my nephews and my faithful friends. You have not spared my innocent Ali Asghar who was too young to cause you any harm. Each one of them has been killed by you, hungry and thirsty.” Imam Husayn fought so bravely that there were cries of *Al aman* from the Yazid’s forces and the soldiers were retreating towards the wall of Kufa, such was the fight of the wounded person who was bearing three days hunger and thirst.

“O you who claim to be the followers of the Prophet, do not smear your hands with my blood for on the day reckoning, you will have to face

my grandfather and my mother who will ask each of you why you shed my blood, knowing that I was innocent, and that I had not done any harm to any of you.” Imam Husayn’s (a.s.) speech reminded those who were hearing him of the eloquence of his father when he used to mount the pulpit and address the congregation in the mosque at Kufa. However, the greed of the mercenaries had complete sway over their hearts and minds. They were thinking that their task was almost accomplished and they would become eligible for the extravagant rewards which they had been promised if they had brought heads of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and his followers to Yazid’s court.

Now Shimr called out all his men to fight one single individual Imam Husayn (a.s.). He shouted to his men “O wretched men, why do you not kill him?” Being taunted in this way, the whole force pounced upon Imam Husayn (a.s.) and

surrounded him from all sides. A rain of arrows, swords and spears was showered upon him till he dismounted his horse that too was badly wounded. Even after that Imam Husayn (a.s.) continued fighting and warding off blows from himself for as long as he could.

Just then, Imam Husayn (a.s.) noticed that the time for Asr prayer had commenced. Though extremely enfeebled and unable to stand, he busied himself in the last prayer of his life in a sitting posture. Once again swords and spears began falling on him as he lay wounded from head to foot. When Imam Husayn (a.s.) bent in his 1st prostration (*Sajda*) of Asr prayer the accursed Shimr climbed his back and severed his sacred head with a dagger.

By the time Shimr's dagger had finished the heinous sin of beheading, the collapsed body of Imam Husayn (a.s.) was in the state of

prostration before Allah and the lips moving were heard to say “O all merciful Allah, accept the humble sacrifice of your Husayn, who has submitted in your way all that you have given him. If this son of your Holy Prophet had anything more, he would have submitted that also to you O all merciful one.”

While Imam Husayn (a.s.) was being mercilessly decapitated, the helpless ladies and innocent children in Imam Husayn’s (a.s.) camp stood at their tents weeping aloud and shouting for help. Sayyeda Zainab ran from her tent towards her brother, shouting to Ibn Saad for mercy, but Ibn Saad’s heart was utterly devoid of mercy.

When Sayyeda Zainab could not see her brother on horseback, she began to shout “O ruthless ones, is there no muslim amongst you to help the lonely grandson of the Prophet?” None

heeded her words. She climbed a mount now known as *Till-e-Zainabia* and saw the harrowing scene and in desperation shouted to Umar ibn Saad “O son of Saad, May Allah cut short your progeny, the grandson of the Prophet is being slain and you are silently watching.” Sayyeda Zainab ran to Imam Zainul Abideen and told him what had happened. They stood silently, tears rolling down their cheek. A strong gust of wind blew on the desert. They felt as if nature itself was crying with them. The silence was only broken by the beating of drums from the enemy camp. They were celebrating their victory. It was indeed a hollow victory, won by a well fed huge army of more than thirty thousand, fighting against an army of seventy two brave warriors, who died hungry and thirsty.

The brutes now turned towards the camps which contained only the helpless ladies, the crying children, and Imam Zainul Abideen

(a.s.), the ailing and unconscious son of Imam Husayn (a.s.). The plundered the camp, setting the tents on fire. The gentle and noble ladies, who were unique models of chaste and modest womanhood, ran from one burning tent to another in a vain attempt to save their lives as well as preserve their chastity. The brutes took the ladies and the children as captives, and the weak and the sick Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) was bound in heavy thorny chains.

MAJLIS 10

EVENING OF ASHURA (SHAME GARIBAN)

The evening of Ashura, the tenth of Muharram, which is known as Sham-e-Ghariban was full of sorrow and grief for the bereaved women and children of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and his associates, who were martyred during the day. Their men had all been departed from this world, their property had been snatched away and the tents had been burnt to ashes, further in addition to these calamities, the women as well as the children had all been deprived of food and water for the last three days.

Even the dead body of Imam (a.s.) was not spared from humiliation and torture. Soon after Imam Husayn (a.s.) had been slain, his severed head was exhibited on the spear head, with drums being beaten in jubilation of this awful event. Then Umar ibn Saad ordered that headless body

of the Imam should be trampled under horses' hooves. For this inhumane purpose ten horsemen were selected and made to run over the sacred corps from one end to the other for several times. The clothes of the holy body were also robbed by several persons.

The animosity born by the enemy towards Imam Husayn (a.s.) did not end with the taking of his life and the lives of his Companions but was further demonstrated on their treatment of the members of his family consisting of defenseless women and children. They set fire to all the tents. Sayyeda Zainab was very distressed. She turned to Imam Zainul Abideen and said, "You are our Imam now. Tell us what we should do now, should we stay in our tents and burn, or go out without our veils?" Imam Zainul Abideen told her that it was his religious duty to try and save their lives. Sayyeda Zainab gathered every one and waited outside, while the tents were being burned down.

When the fire was out, they took shelter under one of the tents which had not been completely destroyed.

As the night descended Sayyeda Zainab gathered all the ladies and children under one small space in between one of the gutted tents. Sayyeda Zainab found that Sakina, the beloved daughter of Imam Husayn (a.s.), was not there. Sayyeda Zainab started looking here and there in search of Sayyeda Sakina and with every passing minute her anxiety was increasing. She was shouting, "O Sakina! My darlings tell me where are you? Where shall I look for you in this limitless desert?" in utter frustration she turned to the place where the body of Imam Husayn lay, running towards Imam Husayn (a.s.) body she cried, "Husayn my brother I cannot find Sakina whom you has left to my care, tell me brother where shall I look for her in this wilderness." She saw Sakina clinging to the dead body of her

father and sleeping with her head rested on his chest. Slowly she came near the child and gently cried “Sakina my child, I have come here after searching for you all over this desert.” Sayyeda Sakina opened her eyes and Sayyeda Zainab could see that her eyes were swollen as if she had cried her heart out. She gently picked her up in her arms and said, “Sakina tell me what made you come here. My child how could you find your fathers beheaded body in this dark night.” Innocently the child replied, “O Aunt! I wanted to tell my father what these people had done to me. I wanted to tell him that his dear Sakina had been robbed off the earring which he had so lovingly presented. I wanted to tell him that they snatched it away tearing my ear lobes. I wanted to tell him that when I cried with pain, I had been mercilessly slapped by that beast.” The child continued sobbing, “when I left the tent I was running aimlessly in the desert shouting, father tell me where you are lying, Sakina

wants to come to you and tell you about all the sufferings she has endured since you left her. I felt a morning cry from this direction. Sakina my own Sakina come here, come here.”

Holding Sakina hands, Sayyeda Zainab returned to the camp. On reaching the tent she put the exhausted child in the mother’s arms with the request to put her to sleep. For Sayyeda Zainab there were other duties to perform and a vigil to keep outside so that no intruders could disturb the children, the hungry and thirsty children, who were one by one falling into the sleep of sheer exhaustion.

She had hardly come out of the tent when she noticed that a group of ladies were coming towards the burnt out camp. Hur’s wife came up towards Sayyeda Zainab and pleaded: “my revered lady, I am Hur's wife and I have come to condole your brother’s demise and have brought

some food and water for the children.” Sayyeda Zainab hung her arms around the neck of Hur's wife and said “O our guest’s spouse, we are sorry to say that your husband came to us as a guest and we could not show him any hospitality. Let me condole you for your husband’s martyrdom.”

Sayyeda Zainab saw the food and water with tearful eyes and turning towards Hur’s wife she said, “O lady for whom have you brought all this, all our men young and old have passed away thirsty. Even the six month old Ali Asghar could not get water to quench his thirst.” With persistent request Hur’s wife put the food and water before the ladies and departed. With a beaker filled with water Sayyeda Zainab went over to where Sayyeda Sakina was sleeping and woke her up saying “Sakina my child there is water for you. Get up my child and have some water.”

Sayyeda Sakina got up from her sleep and looked at her aunt with child like innocence she asked: “Dear aunt you too have remained thirsty for days, why don't you drink it first.” Sayyeda Zainab replied with a lump in her throat, “my child it is usual to give food and drink to the youngest first. Since you are the youngest here, I have brought it to you.”

Hearing this Sayyeda Sakina took the beaker filled with water from Sayyeda Zainab's hand and ran out of the tent. Sayyeda Zainab rushed out of the tent asking her where she was going. The child replied: “I am taking the water to my brother Ali Asghar who is sleeping amongst the dead. Did you not tell me that it is usual to offer such things to the youngest?” This innocent reply of Sayyeda Sakina made the women folk cry bitterly.

Zainab was now making rounds of the tent,

sometimes looking towards the place where lay the dead bodies of all her dear ones, Ali Akbar, Qasim, Aun and Muhammad and sometimes she was looking in the direction of the river, where lay the body of her brother Abbas. She was overcome with grief which had become unbearable for her, when suddenly she saw a person galloping towards the camp as if he was coming from a long distance. She could not make out whether it was a dream or reality. Sayyeda Zainab rushed towards the rider and shouted at him "O sheikh! Do not disturb us in our hour of grief and helplessness. I am the grand daughter of the Prophet of Islam and daughter of Ali and Fatimah." She saw the person on horse back lift the veil from his face and it was her father Imam Ali. She heard him burst out into tears and say "Zainab, I have come over to take from you the duty of guarding the widows and children of my Husayn and his companions. O Zainab what have these forces of evil done to you all?"

Sayyeda Zainab felt as if she must unburden her heart to her father. "O Father, how late you have come. Where were you when my Ali Akbar and Qasim, Abbas and others fell in the battlefield? Where were you when your Husayn's head was mercilessly severed from his body without giving him a drop of water, where were you when Ali Asghar's throat was pierced with an arrow, where were you when Sakina's earrings were snatched away mercilessly and she was being slapped by Shimr, where were you when Yazid's soldiers snatched away our veils and set fire to our tents?" these outpouring of her heart were shaking her body in convulsions. The dawn was breaking at that time; she shook off her tears, performed Tayyammum and began her morning prayers. She lay down her head in prostration and prayed "O Allah! Give me the strength to bear the hardships that I have to face. Give me courage to carry on the mission which I have to fulfill, give me patience to bear the insults and indignities which

are to be inflicted on me - for you are the source of all power and strength.”

On the morning of eleventh Muharram the entire army of Umar ibn Saad prepared themselves for its march back towards Kufa, with the severed heads of the Martyrs raised on their lances. The looted caravan of the Holy house of the Prophet was made captives and was made to mount saddle-less camels like criminals. Imam Zainul Abideen hand and feet were clasped together in iron chains and he was made to walk bare foot on the hot desert sand, even though he was sick. The poor ladies sometimes looked at the heads of their martyred husbands, brothers and children with tears flowing from their eyes. The children seeing the severed head of their loved ones cried aloud innocently calling them to return to them and to relive them of their torturous misery.

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